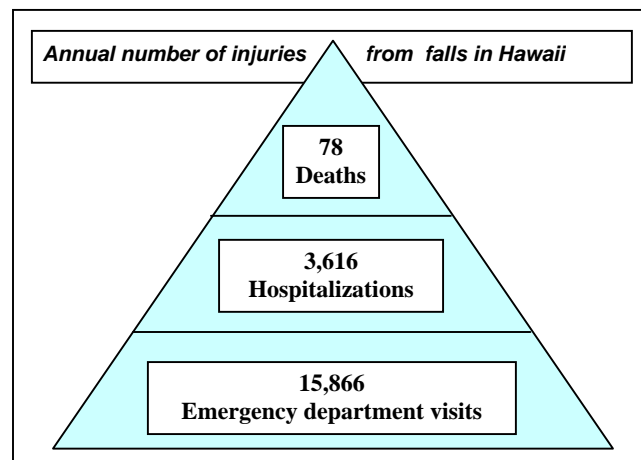# Falls
Injury Factsheet

Injury Prevention & Control Program   **August, 2005**

Overview

Hawaii had the 23rd highest fall fatality rate in the United States, a rate that was 14% higher than that for the rest of the country.

Falls were the 2nd leading cause of injury mortality in Hawaii, and the leading cause of non-fatal injury-related hospitalizations and emergency department (ED) visits.   For every Hawaii resident killed by a fall, there are approximately 46 who are hospitalized, and another 203 who are treated in EDs for non-fatal falls each year.

Annual number of injuries   from falls in Hawaii

78 Deaths

3,616 Hospitalizations

15,866 Emergency department visits

This factsheet describes injuries to Hawaii residents only, unless otherwise noted. Mortality data is mostly compiled from years 2000-2004. Hospitalization (2003) and ED data (2002) includes only non-fatal injuries.

Mortality trends (2000-2004)

- No clear trend for fatal falls, for either all ages (67 to 97 deaths per year) or seniors only (49 to 78 deaths per year).

Groups at risk

- Most of the victims of fatal falls (77%), and falls requiring hospitalization (67%) were aged 65 years or older. The risk of both kinds of falls increased dramatically across the senior age range.
- Children under 15 years of age comprise 37% of victims who are treated in EDs.
- Forty-two percent of the victims were females, the highest such proportion among the main injury categories. Among seniors, women comprise 50% of those killed by falls and 58% of those hospitalized.

Environment/geography

- About three-fourths of the falls among seniors occurred in the home environment, most commonly the yard or other outside areas, or in bathrooms or bedrooms (Oahu EMS data).
- There were no significant differences in fall fatality rates across counties.

Contributing factors

- An estimated 64% of the EMS-attended falls involved intrinsic, or personal factors. The most common intrinsic factor was loss of balance, followed by transfer falls (mostly getting up from chairs, or out of beds).
- Extrinsic or environmental factors were noted in about one-fourth (26%) of the Oahu EMS reports.